

The common core, in fact, provided relief from competitive pressure from other states. Sonny Perdue, the governor of Georgia at the time that the common core was created (the initiative was launched in 2009, and the standards were released in 2010), did not like it when the low-performing students of his state were compared with students in other states with standards different from Georgia's. He became the lead governor in bringing the National Governors Association into the national standards effort.

Nationalizing standards and tests eliminated them as differentiated school reform instruments that could be used by states in competition over educational attainment among the states.

The common core undermines citizens' exit option and competitive federalism. It was designed to do so. It likewise evades and negates the voice option. But the makers of this malign utopia have forgotten a few things.

They forgot that the desire for a voice, the desire for political action, can become particularly intense when people are faced with the prospect of nowhere to exit to. They forgot that hemming in parents and teachers would create a demand for alternatives and escape routes. Alternatives to the national common-core-aligned tests have arisen. States are dropping these national tests. States are also struggling to escape the common-core cartel itself. Parents are opting out of common-core testing.

By trying to block exit and voice, the designers and proponents of the Common Core State Standards have caused blowback: A large parent-, teacher-, and community-based movement has arisen to oppose the common core and its national tests.

DEDICATION TO RESEARCH

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Arturo Hernandez, Pearland, Texas resident and University of Houston professor, on receiving the Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Award. This award honors his groundbreaking research on how the brain processes and learns language.

Dr. Hernandez's research on language study merits such recognition not only because it is an outstanding accomplishment in its own right, but also because it opens the gate to a new and undiscovered field of study at the convergence of language processing and genetics.

I commend Dr. Arturo Hernandez on his dedication to research that promises to inform and meaningfully impact the education process. On behalf of the residents of the Twenty-Second Congressional of Texas, congratulations again to Dr. Hernandez for receiving the Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Award.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MIKE POMPEO

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. POMPEO. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 92, 93, 94 I was unable to cast my vote due to attending a speaking event on the impor-

tance of U.S. Cyber Security. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea.

NIGERIA ON THE BRINK?

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation and is the continent's largest economy. Unfortunately, Nigeria is beset by various challenges that threaten the peace and stability of this African giant. The terrorist group Boko Haram continues its bloody reign of terror, now threatening to establish a "caliphate" on the model of ISIS in the Levant. Religious and ethnic discord, which pre-dates Boko Haram's emergence, continues unabated. Lower oil prices have serious damaged an economy significantly dependent on oil revenues. Meanwhile, the prospect of a violent repeat of the 2011 post-election scene has ratcheted up tensions in Nigeria even further. A hearing that I recently held examined the situation in Nigeria and the U.S. efforts to maintain positive relations with the largest U.S. trading partner in Africa and a major ally in international peace-keeping.

U.S.-Nigeria relations were understandably rocky during the military rule of Sani Abacha in the 1990s. However, the advent of democracy with the 1999 elections ushered in an improved atmosphere of cooperation. Nigeria consistently ranks among the top recipients of U.S. bilateral foreign assistance and is the second-largest beneficiary of U.S. investment in Africa. In recent months, though, our relations have deteriorated. Apparently, some in the government of President Goodluck Jonathan feel the United States is meddling in their internal affairs, especially when it comes to our noting deprival of the due process rights of citizens by Nigerian military and security forces. Our view is that friends don't just stand by when friends commit human rights abuses.

The subcommittee that I chair held a hearing last July 10th to examine the complaints that human rights vetting was a major obstacle to U.S. counterterrorism. What we found was that the State Department estimated that half of Nigerian forces would pass our vetting process, which we found is slowed by too few staff working on these important issues. Still, the Nigerian Government must be more cooperative. Some units in larger divisions may have human rights issues, but if replaced by units without such baggage, there would be created an entirely acceptable division for training. Late last year, the Nigerian Government cancelled the counter-terrorism training of one of its battalions, which now places the entire training program on hold. We are making arrangements for discussions in the near future with Nigerian Military officials and Members of Congress and the Obama administration to overcome the current stalemate and resume the cooperation necessary to meet the challenge posed by Boko Haram.

This terrorist group has wreaked havoc on the people of Nigeria, particularly in the northeast. It is estimated that more than 5,500 people were killed in Boko Haram attacks last year alone, representing more than 60% of the more than 9,000 deaths caused by this group

in the past five years. As many as 2,000 people may have perished in the Boko Haram attack on the town of Baga and nearby villages last month. More than a million Nigerians have been displaced internally by the violence, and tens of thousands of others are now refugees in neighboring countries. Clearly, Boko Haram violence is escalating drastically.

Boko Haram has become part of the global jihadist movement and threatens not only Nigeria, but also Cameroon, Chad and Niger. While the terrorist group may not be an official affiliate of al-Qaeda or ISIS, they appear to be trying to create an Islamic caliphate in Nigeria. Various press reports estimate that the group has seized as much as 70% of Borno state, with additional territory under its control in neighboring Yobe and Adamawa states. In fact, Reuters calculated that by mid-January of this year, Boko Haram was in control of more than 30,000 square kilometers of territory—an area the size of the state of Maryland. For approximately two years, I pressed the administration to designate Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist organization (FTO). I argued that, like cancer, early intervention can mitigate its spread, severity and duration. I traveled to Nigeria twice and convened three hearings during the last Congress on why an FTO designation might help, only to be told by then-Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson that "the phenomenon of Boko Haram is one of discrediting the Central Government in power for its failure to deliver services to people."

On the very day of our hearing to consider a bill on FTO designation, the state Department, led by Secretary of State Kerry announced that Boko Haram was being designated a Foreign Terrorist organization.

Meanwhile, Nigeria faces the prospects of post-election violence after presidential voting. The race pits President Jonathan against former Nigerian military ruler General Muhammadu Buhari in a re-run of the 2011 elections. This time, however, Buhari's All Progressive Congress (APC) is a coalition of major opposition political parties and includes defectors from President Jonathan's People's Democratic Party (PDP), such as Speaker of the National Assembly Aminu Tambuwal.

Some PDP officials have referred to their opponents as "Nigeria's Muslim Brotherhood," while APC officials accuse the Jonathan administration of representing only Christian southerners. Party spokesmen on both sides have warned of potential violence if their candidate doesn't win. Out of nearly 69 million registered voters in Nigeria, political observers believe this race could be decided by as few as 700,000 votes. Lack of action by the government to ensure that internally displaced voters can participate in the elections, delays in the distribution of voter cards and in the recruitment and training of poll workers places in question the effectiveness of the February elections.

Moreover, the election laws require that a winning presidential candidate must achieve a majority of the votes and at least 25% of the vote in two-thirds of the states. With so much territory in the control of Boko Haram or under the threat of their violence in the North, the northern-based APC likely would question a loss even though they have refused to accept a delay in voting to ensure that pre-election preparations are complete.

According to a recent Gallup poll, only 13% of Nigerians have confidence in the electoral

process. This makes the “Quick Count” being planned by a coalition of Nigerian civil society groups vital in providing any confidence that the vote on February 14th reflects the will of the people.

In the face of all the challenges faced by Nigeria, its allies—such as the United States—must understand fully the context of this situation in order to determine how best to be of help. We hope that the Nigerian Government resulting from the February elections will be accepting of outside advice and assistance. Nigeria is the proverbial “too big to fail” nation. A collapse of its economy, increase in refugees to its neighbors or spread of its homegrown terrorism to the region and the broader international community clearly will be problematic for more than just Nigeria. Religious extremism already is a problem elsewhere in the Sahel region. Last month, Muslim extremists destroyed more than 40 Christian churches in Niger because of what they felt was irreverent depictions of the prophet Mohammed—not in Niger but in Europe. The hearing was just the beginning of our renewed efforts to help Nigeria address the problems that threaten its stability. We must be honest with Nigerians and ourselves about the difficulties we both face. This is why we have asked our witnesses to give their honest assessments of where we are in the various situations Nigeria encounters and to suggest what actions our Government can and should take to be most helpful. It is in our mutual interest to do so, and therefore, we will continue our efforts to restore full military and security cooperation between our two countries.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL BROADCASTERS

SPEECH OF

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2015

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the invaluable service that local broadcasters bring to North Carolina's 8th Congressional district.

From coverage on the most serious issues facing our communities to commentary on local sports teams, we often turn to our local television and radio stations to provide us with timely and relevant news coverage.

Just this week, North Carolina experienced a winter storm that impacted my constituents. It was local broadcasters who were there to deliver emergency communications, weather forecasts, tips on staying safe, and information regarding school closures.

Time and time again, the tireless efforts of our local broadcasting teams produce in-depth reporting that keeps citizens informed on a variety of topics that are important to their lives.

They often lead the way in generosity in our communities and encourage citizens to lend a helping hand to their fellow neighbor.

It is an honor to extend these remarks thanking the local broadcasters in North Carolina's 8th Congressional district for their service to our communities.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH—
WEEKSVILLE (BROOKLYN, NY)

HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, as Black History Month comes to a close, I would like to share with you the untold story of Weeksville. Weeksville, though rarely mentioned among the historically black and vibrant neighborhoods, was very dynamic and was founded by African-American free men in Brooklyn during the 19th century.

In 1838, a former Virginia slave named James Weeks bought land from another free African-American man. Several African-American investors, political activists and other free men from the South started moving to this plot of land bought by Mr. Weeks. As more and more people moved to this Promised Land, it became known as Weeksville. By 1850, more than 500 African-American free men were residing in Weeksville.

According to historical reports, the population of Weeksville was quite diverse, two of the residents were born in Africa, 40% of the residents were south-born and the rest of the inhabitants were from all over the East Coast. Not only was Weeksville diverse, but it was also a successful and independent community. One-third of the men in the neighborhood over the age of 21 were landowners, the community had its own churches, had a school which was the first school in the U.S. to integrate both staff and students, and a newspaper called “Freedman's Torchlight”. In the 1860s, the national headquarter of the African Society Civilization was located in Weeksville and the neighborhood also housed an orphanage called the Howard Colored Orphan Asylum.

Today, all that remains of Weeksville are four small cottages known as the Hunter Road houses. Fortunately, the Weeks Heritage Center formed in 1972 has managed to raise funds to preserve the houses as National Historic places. Preserving such landscapes is important to educate our children and to embrace the beauty of their heritage.

If you want to learn more about Weeksville, I invite you to read the book “Brooklyn's Promised Land: The Free Black Community of Weeksville, New York” by Judith Wellman. In this book, Professor Wellman provides details about the everyday lives of the inhabitants of Weeksville and also narrates the rise and fall of this promising community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, on February 26, 2015 my vote on roll call no. 98 was not recorded electronically. I would like to state that I intended to vote “no”.

TRIBUTE TO THE TRINITY COLLEGE BANTAMS MENS SQUASH TEAM—2015 NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the 2015 National Team Championship (NTC) Men's champions, the Trinity College Bantams. On Sunday, February 22, the men secured their 15th national title and Potter Cup.

Their accomplishments continue to raise the standard for athleticism and achievement. I would like to congratulate each member of the team, Coach Paul Assaiane, and all the fans and supporters who made this great victory possible. Also, the Trinity's women's squash team deserves special recognition for their strong season under Coach Wendy Bartlett.

I cannot communicate these achievements more articulately than the Hartford Courant did in its editorial published on February 23rd: Trinity College Bantams Rule Men's Squash Roost.

I submit the text of that article.

[From The Hartford Courant, Feb. 23, 2015]

TRINITY COLLEGE BANTAMS RULE MEN'S SQUASH ROOST

Congratulations to Trinity College's men's squash team, which defended its home court Sunday and brought home its 15th national championship since 1998. The Bantams reclaimed the crown they have lost only lost four times in 19 consecutive finals appearances. Once the mouse that roared among the indoor racket game's longtime Ivy League establishment, Trinity has gone from upstart to pacesetter.

Under the steady tutelage of coach Paul Assaiane, who has guided the team's remarkable rise to the squash elite, the Bantams won a handy 7-2 victory over St. Lawrence University, which was making its initial appearance in the national finals. It was the first time that no Ivy League team was in the Potter Cup finals since the championship began in 1989. Among college champions crowned since 1942, only the U.S. Naval Academy and Trinity have supplanted Ivy League schools as national champions. In a sign of the sport's broadening reach, the University of Rochester and Franklin and Marshall College were other non-Ivy contenders this year.

Trinity's women's squash team, the 2014 national champions, deserves its own congratulations for a strong season that fell one win short of defending its title. The women, under coach Wendy Bartlett, lost in the national finals to the Harvard University women on Feb. 15.

RECOGNIZING DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT'S (DIA) 20 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Denver International Airport's (DIA) 20 years of service to the people of Colorado. The airport started serving flyers on February